

**Abstract**

An optical reader is provided that can be reprogrammed. In one method a plurality of commands are encoded into a plurality of optical symbols, at least one of the optical symbols is displayed on a display, and the at least one displayed optical symbol is read to reprogram an optical reader. In another method an optical reader is coupled to a computer having a plurality of computer programs. The computer can receive an identifier from the optical reader to determine reader compatibility, and select a compatible optical reader program. In another method, a plurality of parameters are encoded into at least one bar code symbol. The at least one bar code symbol can be output in such form that an optical reader can read the at least one bar code symbol, and the at least one bar code symbol can be read to download the plurality of parameters to an optical reader.